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AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please cancel claims 9, 21 and 27 without prejudice, and amend claims 3, 5, 8, 10 and 11 as provided in the following complete listing of the claims.

1. (Canceled).
2. (Canceled).
3. (Currently Amended) A data distribution apparatus comprising:
receiving means for receiving a special playback request signal from an external source;
~~data storage means for storing playback data, and also storing special playback data and splicing data, both of which are used for playing back the playback data in a special mode, wherein intra-frame encoding is used for a substantial portion of the special playback data;~~
~~data switching means for selectively outputting the playback data, the special playback data and the splicing data from said data storage means for transmission to a buffer of a data receiving terminal, wherein the splicing data is inserted as the selective output for transmission to the buffer such that a locus of used bits of the buffer is continuous when switching between the playback data and the special playback data, and wherein the insertion of the splicing data accounts for intra-frame encoding being used for a substantial portion of the special playback data reading from said data storage means in response to the request signal received by said receiving means, and reading splicing data from said data storage means when switching between the playback data and a special playback data or preventing an overflow or an underflow in a buffer of a data receiving terminal; and~~
~~transmission means for transmitting the selective output the playback data, the special playback data or the splicing data from said data switching means to the data receiving terminal via a transmission medium; and~~
~~wherein the data switching means generates the special playback data by decoding a special playback data by reading the selected playback data from said data storage means in response to a type of special playback and encoding the decoded special playback data when the request signal indicates the special playback.~~

4. (ORIGINAL) A data distribution apparatus according to claim 3, wherein the splicing data comprises repeat data which is equivalent to data positioned immediately before the splicing data.

5. (Currently Amended) A data distribution apparatus comprising:

receiving means for receiving a special playback request signal from an external source;

data storage means for storing playback data and splicing data;

decoding means for reading the playback data from said data storage means in response to the special playback a type of special playback corresponding to the request signal, and for decoding the read playback data so as to generate a special playback signal;

encoding means for encoding the special playback signal generated by said decoding means so as to generate special playback data, wherein intra-frame encoding is used for a substantial portion of the special playback data;

data switching means for selectively outputting the playback data, the special playback data obtained by said encoding means and the splicing data read from said data storage means, wherein the splicing data is inserted as the selective output for transmission to a buffer of a receiving terminal such that a locus of used bits of the buffer is continuous when switching between the playback data and the special playback data, and wherein the insertion of the splicing data accounts for intra-frame encoding being used for a substantial portion of the special playback data in response to the request signal received by said receiving means, wherein the splicing data is read from said data storage means when switching between the playback data and the special playback data or when preventing an overflow or an underflow in a buffer of a receiving terminal; and

transmission means for transmitting the selective output playback data, the special playback data or the splicing data to the data receiving terminal via a transmission medium.

6. (ORIGINAL) A data distribution apparatus according to claim 5, wherein the splicing data comprises repeat data which is equivalent to data positioned immediately before the splicing data.

7. (Canceled).

8. (Currently Amended) A data distribution method for reading special playback data from a data storage unit to a receiving terminal, said data storage unit storing playback data, and also storing the special playback data and splicing data, both of which are used for playing back the playback data in a special mode, said data distribution method comprising the steps of:

~~receiving a special playback request signal from an external source;~~

~~reading the special playback data from said data storage unit in response to the special playback request to provide an output data for the special mode, wherein intra-frame encoding is used for a substantial portion of the special playback data a special playback corresponding to the request signal;~~

~~reading the splicing data from said data storage unit and inserting the splicing data into the output data for the special mode, wherein the splicing data is inserted such that a locus of used bits of a buffer of the receiving terminal is continuous when switching between the special mode and a normal mode, and wherein the insertion of the splicing data accounts for intra-frame encoding being used for a substantial portion of the special playback data;~~

~~decoding the playback data so as to generate a special playback signal, and encoding the special playback signal so as to generate special playback data, wherein the special playback data is generated in response to a type of special playback;~~

~~selectively outputting the playback data, the special playback data obtained by encoding the special playback signal, and the splicing data in response to the request signal received by said receiving means, wherein the splicing data is read from said data storage means when switching between the playback data and the special playback data or when preventing an overflow or an underflow in a buffer of the receiving terminal; and~~

~~transmitting the output data the playback data, the special playback data or the splicing data to the receiving terminal via a transmission medium.~~

9. (Canceled).

10. (Currently Amended) A data distribution system for distributing data which includes special playback data from a data distribution apparatus to a terminal device,

said data distribution apparatus comprising:

receiving means for receiving a special playback request signal from an external source;

data storage means for storing playback data, and also storing special playback data and splicing data, both of which are used for playing back the playback data in a special mode, wherein intra-frame encoding is used for a substantial portion of the special playback data;

data switching means for selectively outputting the playback data, the special playback data and the splicing data from said data storage means for transmission to a buffer of the terminal device, wherein the splicing data is inserted as the selective output for transmission to the buffer such that a locus of used bits of the buffer is continuous when switching between the playback data and the special playback data, wherein the insertion of the splicing data accounts for intra-frame encoding being used for a substantial portion of the special playback data reading from said data storage means in response to the request signal received by said receiving means, and reading splicing data from said data storage means when switching between the playback data and a special playback data or preventing an overflow or an underflow in a buffer of said terminal device; and

transmission means for transmitting the selective output the playback data, the special playback data or the splicing data from said data switching means to said terminal device via a transmission medium, wherein the data switching means generates the special playback data by decoding a special playback data by reading the selected playback data from said data storage means in response to a type of special playback and encoding the decoded special playback data when the request signal indicates the special playback, and

said terminal device comprising:

receiving means for receiving the data transmitted from said data distribution apparatus; and

decoding means for decoding the data received by said receiving means.

11. (Currently Amended) A data distribution system for distributing data which includes special playback data from a data distribution apparatus to a terminal device, said data distribution apparatus comprising:
receiving means for receiving a special playback request signal from an external source;
data storage means for storing playback data and splicing data;

decoding means for reading the playback data from said data storage means in response to the special playback a type of special playback corresponding to the request signal, and for decoding the read playback data so as to generate a special playback signal;

encoding means for encoding the special playback signal generated by said decoding means so as to generate special playback data, wherein intra-frame encoding is used for a substantial portion of the special playback data;

data switching means for selectively outputting the playback data, the special playback data obtained by said encoding means and the splicing data read from said data storage means, wherein the splicing data is inserted as the selective output for transmission to a buffer of a receiving terminal such that a locus of used bits of the buffer is continuous when switching between the playback data and the special playback data, and wherein the insertion of the splicing data accounts for intra-frame encoding being used for a substantial portion of the special playback data in response to the request signal received by said receiving means, wherein the splicing data is read from said data storage means when switching between the playback data and the special playback data or when preventing an overflow or an underflow in a buffer of the terminal device; and

transmission means for transmitting the playback data, the special playback data or the splicing data from said data switching means to said terminal device via a transmission medium, and

said terminal device comprising:

receiving means for receiving the data transmitted from said data distribution apparatus; and

decoding means for decoding the data received by said receiving means.

12. (Canceled).

13. (Canceled).

14. (Canceled).

15. (Canceled).

16. (Canceled).

17. (Canceled).

18. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 3, wherein insertion of the splicing data is according to a splicing technique used in editing such that the locus of used bits of the buffer is continuous.

19. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 5, wherein insertion of the splicing data is according to a splicing technique used in editing such that the locus of used bits of the buffer is continuous.

20. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 8, wherein insertion of the splicing data is according to a splicing technique used in editing such that a locus of used bits of the buffer is continuous.

21. (Canceled).

22. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 10, wherein insertion of the splicing data is according to a splicing technique used in editing such that a locus of used bits of the buffer is continuous.

23. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 11, wherein insertion of the splicing data is according to a splicing technique used in editing such that a locus of used bits of the buffer is continuous.

24. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 3, wherein the ~~entirety of the~~ special playback data is intra-frame encoded, and the playback data is substantially inter-frame predictive encoded.

25. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 5, wherein the ~~entirety of the~~ special playback data is intra-frame encoded, and the playback data is substantially inter-frame predictive encoded.

26. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 8, wherein the ~~entirety of the~~ special playback data is intra-frame encoded, and the playback data is substantially inter-frame predictive encoded.

27. (Canceled).

28. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 10, wherein the ~~entirety of the~~ special playback data is intra-frame encoded, and the playback data is substantially inter-frame predictive encoded.

29. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 11, wherein the ~~entirety of the~~ special playback data is intra-frame encoded, and the playback data is substantially inter-frame predictive encoded.